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# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2728

August 25, 1995

**C-R-P SIGN-UP DATES** -- Stricter, but more environmentally friendly, is how USDA officials describe the rules for this year's Conservation Reserve Program. Sign-up for the 13th annual program will run from September 11-22 in county Farm Service Agency offices, but this time around the rules have changed. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman says acreage enrolled will have to meet higher environmental and conservation criteria than ever before. USDA can accept up to 651,000 acres into the program, the same amount withdrawn under the one-time early out period in May. One of the major enrollment changes will be to allow producers to submit Environmental Priority bids for more environmentally sensitive practices. Those bids would then receive the highest possible environmental benefits ranking. Farm Service Agency (FSA) Acting Administrator Grant Buntrock says bid caps would be announced ahead of time to let farmers know what the highest possible bid limit would be on the acreage. Since Buntrock anticipates receiving more requests than USDA can fill, he said this would give farmers a chance to underbid that cap if they wanted to. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

**LIVESTOCK, DAIRY AND POULTRY OUTLOOK** -- Red meat and poultry exports continue on their record setting pace, helping to offset the U.S. trade deficit. In their latest Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Situation and Outlook, USDA economists say exports through June 30 had already reached a value more than \$2.9 billion, compared to \$5.3 billion for all of 1994. Economists are predicting stronger **beef** exports and declining imports. Exports continue to be strong in the Pacific Rim, but shipments to other countries are up more than 50 percent from last year. First half 1995 exports of **pork** jumped 74 percent above last year, supported by higher shipments to the Pacific Rim, South America and countries of the Former Soviet Union. **Dairy** prices could increase as economists are looking at a slow but sure economic expansion and modest gains in retail dairy prices. Projected use of most dairy products is expected to rise during the rest of 1995. The **poultry** sector is seeing exports of broilers grow while turkey exports remain stagnant. Broiler exports rose 36 percent above the same time last year and economists are expecting a net growth of 27 percent for the year. Smaller turkey sales to Mexico could be the reason turkey exports for the first half of 1995 were down slightly from last year. Exports of turkey had been growing rapidly in past years, and USDA economists are predicting continued growth in U.S. production and stable prices in 1996 which should boost exports to several Asian markets. **Contact: Ron Gustafson (202) 219-1286.**

**SMALLER WHEAT CROP, HIGHER PRICES** -- Lower U.S. wheat production pushed domestic wheat prices to \$4.24 per bushel in July, which could be the highest July farm price on record. Export prices are following the same trend, where prices reached \$186 per ton in July, the highest since December of 1980. U.S. wheat output for 1995 is forecast at 2.2 billion bushels, as reported in USDA's latest Agricultural Outlook, down 4 percent from 1994 and the third consecutive year of decline in area planted, area harvested and yields. The biggest reduction is predicted for winter wheat. **Contact: Nathan Childs (202) 501-8540.**

**U.S. TURNING "GREEN" --** The U.S. "green" industry is flourishing! The industry, which combines indoor flowers and potted plants with outdoor landscaping products, is expected to rise by 5 percent over last year. USDA officials are predicting grower sales of \$10.5 billion this year and they're expecting the business to grow 4-6 percent annually. Greenhouse and nursery crops makes up 11 percent of cash receipts for all U.S. farm crops, making it the sixth largest commodity group in agriculture. While the landscaping sector has been adversely affected by economic conditions, demand for bedding plants has remained robust. **Contact: Lois Caplan (202) 501-8542.**

**MORE INPUT SOUGHT ON FOOD SAFETY PROPOSAL --** The Department of Agriculture will hold a series of meetings in September to discuss its proposal to improve the safety of meat and poultry. In February of this year, USDA published the proposed rule labeled "Pathogen Reduction: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Systems" and asked for comments. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman says the upcoming meetings will be another opportunity to talk about major concerns brought up during that comment period. USDA's Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety, Michael Taylor says "Public dialogue during the decision making process will improve the final rule." USDA has also reopened the comment rule on the HACCP proposal until 30 days after the last public meeting in September. To find out where and when the meetings will be held, contact Lisa Parks at (202) 501-7138. **Contact: Hedy Ohringer (202) 720-9113.**

**CHANGING REGULATIONS ON ORGANISMS --** The U.S. Department of Agriculture wants to know your views on their proposal to amend regulations on genetically engineered plants. Specifically, amendments would allow most modified plants to be introduced under the notification process as long as they meet certain criteria. USDA has the responsibility of assuring no plant pest risk is present when it releases any bioengineered organism into the environment, says John Payne of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. He says proposed changes would simplify procedures for introducing genetically engineered organisms. The amendment would also allow less field test reporting when no unexpected or adverse effects are observed. Additionally, USDA scientists would be allowed to extend an existing determination to articles closely resembling an organism that has already been determined to be safe. Send comments by October 23 to USDA's APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 734-6573.**

**HOT OR COLD, KEEP IT SAFE --** The good old days of packing school lunches are here again. If you're packing lunches for school or work, keeping food safe is important, says Bessie Berry, the acting director of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline. Berry says there are three rules when packing sack lunches: keep hot food hot, keep cold food cold and keep food clean. Letting ice water or boiling water sit in a clean thermos before putting foods in will keep them colder or hotter longer. How you pack food is important as well, says Berry. She says food should be wrapped carefully to keep it clean, and lunch boxes and thermoses should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and warm water every day. But don't re-use bags or use bags that once held groceries, cautions Berry. She says using grocery bags can pass on insects or bacteria to lunch food. For more information on packing a safe lunch or any food safety information, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. **Contact: Bessie Berry (202) 720-5604.**

**FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE**

**AGRICULTURE USA # 1995** -- USDA has a new Under Secretary, and she is the focus of this week's Agriculture USA. Brenda Curtis talks with Jill Long about her plans for turning rural America around. (Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary).

**CONSUMER TIME # 1474** -- Drinking water concerns. Chickens are safer from E-coli bacteria with help from antibiotic. Taking preventive medicine seriously. Changing rural America. Secretary Dan Glickman talks about HACCP. (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

**AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1987** -- New hope for sick chickens. Herbicides in drinking water. Farm exports in the year 2010. The successful "green" industry. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Tuesday, August 29, weekly weather and crops. Thursday, August 31, agricultural exports; poultry outlook; agricultural prices; tobacco world markets and trade. Friday, September 1, poultry slaughter; world horticultural trade and export opportunities. Monday, September 4, HOLIDAY. Tuesday, September 5, weekly weather and crops. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.  
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

**FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE**

**FEATURES** -- Patrick O'Leary reports on how USDA's "Water 2000" program brought clean running water to a rural community in Illinois.

**ACTUALITIES** -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman talks about labeling requirements for fresh and frozen poultry and about upcoming public meetings on the proposal to improve meat and poultry safety. USDA economist Nathan Childs on the rise in Consumer Price Index for food and growth in the greenhouse and nursery crop industry. USDA economist Leland Southard discusses red meat and poultry exports. USDA meteorologist Bob Stefanski comments on the latest weather and crop conditions.

**UPCOMING** -- Patrick O'Leary reports on USDA "Beagle Brigade's" tenth anniversary, and Lynn Wyvill reports on growing tomatoes using organic mulch.

**ATTENTION BROADCASTERS: There are some satellite changes in next week's television newsfeed. Please make a note of them.** Monday, August 28, from 11:00 to 11:15 a.m. EDT. Telstar 401 (C-Band), Channel 18, downlink frequency 4060 MHZ, Audio 6.2 and 6.8. Thursday, August 31, Galaxy 6, C-band, Transponder 1, Channel 1 Downlink Frequency 3720 MHz, Audio 6.2 and 6.8.

**Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.**  
**Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.**

## OFF MIKE

**CELLULAR BROADCASTING**...is a convenient and reliable way to handle remote broadcasts these days. **Tom Brand** and **Tom Beavers** (KMA, Shenandoah, IA) recently broadcast live from 17 county fairs, covering 16 in 15 days. They took along their computer marketing source so they could include markets in their remote reports. Brand estimates that they only went off-the-air three times out of 200 wireless broadcasts through cellular phone connections. Two weeks ago, KMA Radio celebrated its 70th Anniversary, and 500 listeners came for free pancakes and sausage to help them celebrate.

**BOVINE TB CASE**...was verified in a dairy heifer in northeast Wisconsin by a USDA lab. **Bob Meyer** (Goetz Farm Radio Network, Marshfield, WI) reported that the state veterinarian is working to trace the source since Wisconsin is certified tuberculosis free. Crops are looking good because the hot summer helped outgrow the late start caused by a cool spring. Bob still gets help in covering farm shows for his 45-station Wisconsin network from **Les Leonard** who marked his 70th birthday this year.

**50 YEARS**...as a state fair exhibitor? **Dave Russell** (Tribune Radio Networks, Indianapolis, IN) discovered one family that had been a hog exhibitor for 55 years and another one that had entered the sheep competition for 50 years at the Indiana State Fair. Dave just wrapped up 12 days of coverage there at the "hottest State Fair on record." Even the longtime exhibitors couldn't remember so many 90-degree days. The upcoming Farm Progress Show at Jarvis Farms near Terre Haute, IN on September 26-28 will feature a panel of former Secretaries of Agriculture on the first day, Russell reports.

**SWINE PRODUCTION**...is a big topic in North Carolina. **Bob Ellison**, broadcaster with the North Carolina Farm Bureau, says there is concern for better monitoring of hog waste lagoons. He says our radio newsline and cassette services are useful in preparation of their weekly broadcasts.

*Larry A. Quinn*

**LARRY A. QUINN**, Director

Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

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